



# Food No

*The Newsletter of Food For People • The Food Bank of*



## Holidays at Our Pantries

*By Darci Gibson,  
Pantry Network Coordinator*

There was a huge wave of support from our community this holiday season, which included many volunteers and a spirit of generosity at all of the pantries in our network. The spirit of giving was everywhere and helped Food for People provide assistance to our most vulnerable neighbors. In the following excerpts, a few of our pantries share the love, support and appreciation they felt during the holidays.

**Arcata Pantry** - "We had an amazing donation from the Girl Scouts (Troop 10623) and Brownies (Troop 10626) from McKinleyville. Their members voted to make stockings for needy children this Christmas. They also made delicious cookies to brighten everyone's day. One day in December, the families that came to the Arcata Pantry took home handmade stockings for their children. The delicious

*Continued on page 4*

*Amy and Cliff Berkowitz are joined by Anne Holcomb of Food for People for the annual KHUM week on left while local Horsemen kick off our holiday drive in style on right!*

## The 21st Holiday Spirit Food & Fund Drive

*By Laura Hughes, L*

What a whirlwind holiday season we've had here at Food for People! The food bank has been positively buzzing during our 21<sup>st</sup> Annual and this program coordinator has been darting hither and thither just to keep up. In addition to our usual tasks and projects, the Eureka warehouse has been in a flurry of activity with staff and volunteers sorting food donations (equaling tens of thousands of pounds) which were received from hundreds of businesses, organizations and schools throughout our community. More groups have been involved in our holiday endeavors this season than in years past and food donation pick-ups

have been a daily occurrence. The tremendous outpouring of support from so many groups has been extraordinary-bringing in a record 69,144 pounds of food. This food will help provide food assistance to our friends and neighbors in need, not just during the holidays, but through the winter months as well. We can't address the need in our community without your help, and we are truly grateful for those who share our vision and have participated in our holiday food drive.

Once again, the Redwood Unit of the Backcountry Horsemen of California officially kicked off our holiday season with their annual Cowboy Canned Food Convoy. Horses and their riders trekked

through Old Town Eureka with saddlebags full of nonperishable food to be donated to the food bank. Excited on-lookers and passers-by waved us on as we traveled to Food for People's Old Town warehouse where we enjoyed feeding apples and carrots to the horses while the food was unloaded.

Several other events in November also helped kick-off our food and fund drive efforts in Arcata. Umpqua Bank's Arcata branch hosted a gallery event during Arts Arcata, collecting nonperishable food items, as well as donating the proceeds of their wine pour to Food for People. Prudential Redwood Realty hosted a food drive in partnership with



# Holiday Spirit Food & Fund Drive

*Continued from page 1*

Holiday Open House included Food for People in their annual event by hosting a food barrel and display. Simply Macintosh coordinated food collection efforts for a number of Plaza businesses during their Holiday Passport event. The Bayside Grange once again collected nonperishable food items as the price of admission to their annual Holiday Handmade Makers Fair, as did Blue Ox Millworks for their holiday event. Faith Center's U-Turn youth group held their annual hunger fast, donating holiday turkeys to Food for People upon completion of the fast. Chabad of Humboldt and St. Bernard's Catholic Church collected food donations during their holiday dinner events. In addition, Jefferson Community Center, Wolf Dawg Cafe, Adorni Center, Redwood Community

Action Agency and HealthSPORT hosted donation barrels during the holidays, along with many others. Mad River Radio even hosted weekly Friday morning on-air food and fund drive broadcasts from area grocery stores throughout the month of December, thereby encouraging the community to donate.

And what would Food for People's Holiday Spirit Food & Fund Drive be without the ever delightful and highly anticipated week-long KHUM on-air food and fund drive? Each year Food for People staff join our enthusiastic and fun-loving KHUM DJ's for live broadcasts at various grocery stores throughout the county to highlight our efforts to meet community needs. Like other events this season, the KHUM drive was wildly successful,



*In photo on bottom left, Carrie Dean and Aaron Gottschalk of Wildberries Marketplace; above left shows Margaret Hague from the Kiwanis Club of Henderson Center join Debora Waxman and Mike Dronkers raise donations during KHUM's on-air food*

bringing in more dollars/pounds than ever before. Some store managers helped encourage donations themselves during the drive, donating register round-up totals to the cause and offering discounts to employees who donated, as well as advertising the event ahead of time. A big shout of thanks goes to the North Coast Co-op, McKinleyville Ray's Food Market, Wildberries Marketplace, Grocery Outlet and Eureka Natural Foods for hosting our broadcasts and encouraging donations. Many thanks also goes to the KHUM gang including Cliff and Amy Berkowitz, Mike Dronkers and Larry Trask for motivating listeners and for their ongoing dedication and support of Food for People.

On top of these community-based efforts, a fleet of Food for People's food collection

barrels and boxes were also placed at our regular slew of holiday drop sites throughout the county which included grocery stores, banks and other local organizations. These drop site locations were listed on our annual holiday food donation bags distributed via the Times Standard, Redwood Times and Tri-City Weekly during the week of Thanksgiving - making it easy for people to donate nonperishable items wherever and whenever it was convenient for them. Thanks goes to Grocery Outlet, North Coast Co-op, Wildberries Marketplace, Safeway, Ray's Food Markets, Murphy's Markets, North Valley Bank, US Bank, Lee Schwab Tire Centers, the Northern California Community Blood Bank and the many others for hosting our official collection drop sites (see the complete list on page 15).

If the plethora of food collection barrels distributed to drop sites and community food drive events throughout the county wasn't enough, our Hunger Fighter teams certainly topped off our food and fund drive efforts. With a record 51 Hunger Fighter teams participating, our 2013 Hunger Fighter Challenge was a critical component of our holiday efforts this season, bringing in more pounds and dollars than years past. More information about our annual Hunger Fighter Challenge including a list of participating teams and Challenge winners can be found on pages 8 and 9 in this edition of Food Notes.

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# Notes from the Director

## Holiday Reflections

By Anne Holcomb



We were honestly more than a little worried heading into the holiday season. Reports of a post recession economic uptick haven't really hit Humboldt County yet, and we are still serving roughly the same number of people we were during the height of the recession. Some of the jobs that were lost have come back, but not enough. Wages and benefits that were cut have generally not been restored

because businesses are being understandably cautious. And as noted numerous times in our publications in recent years, we've seen a lot of folks who were once donors now on the receiving end of our services, struggling to get by.

Keeping each of our programs afloat requires significant coordination of resources, balancing our food supplies and available funding to ensure that we can continue to serve the individuals and households who are in need of food assistance. We've been doing this for 35 years now, and have seen firsthand how fluctuations in our local and national economy from year to year can help or hurt both the strongest and the most vulnerable among us - and our ability to respond. We've also seen how a little bit of help at just the right time can make a difference in an individual or family's ability to survive and thrive.

So what were we so worried about? We were worried about "compassion fatigue" within our donor base after four years of a

punishing recession, knowing that people are more than ready for a little "good news." Would folks still be willing to organize food drives and donate funds?

Would we still be able to serve the 12,000 children, families, individuals living with disabilities and seniors who find themselves teetering on the edge financially each month? Would the community be able to respond with sufficient donations of food and funding to help us keep it all rolling?

Thankfully, the answer was a resounding YES! A record number of Hunger Fighter Teams, schools, service clubs, businesses, churches, and community members countywide stepped up to collect a record-breaking 69,144 lbs. of food that will be used to feed our friends and neighbors in the coming months. And an equally impressive number of folks stepped forward with financial donations that will help to ensure the viability of our programs that cover every corner of Humboldt County, from Garberville to Orick and Eureka

to Hoopa. There is no doubt that the needs will persist in 2014, but you have reassured us that you will continue to work alongside our staff and volunteers to create a stronger, healthier community in the year ahead.

Everyone involved at Food for People joins me in extending our warmest thanks to each and every one of you. We want you to know that we couldn't be more grateful for our community's generosity and support. We hope you will enjoy learning more about each of our holiday initiatives and how they are making a difference as you read through this issue of Food Notes. And we hope you will stand with us in 2014 as we work as a community to address the underlying issues of hunger and poverty. Working together, we CAN be the change we wish to see in the world.

Best wishes to all for a happy, healthy and peaceful 2014,

*Anne Holcomb*

## Welcome Nick!

Nick Gauger joins our team as Warehouse Assistant, helping to move the millions of pounds of food that pass through our doors to their destination. Nick cares deeply about the mission of Food for People and addressing the issue of hunger in our community. He brings a diversity of experience with him.

Nick pursued studies in Biology, first at the University of Pittsburgh and later at the University of

Minnesota. He grew up on the east coast where for years he participated in communal farming and later on spent time working on his uncle's organic dairy farm. He has spent many hours working on social justice issues in New Mexico, Nevada and California, and has volunteered in a diversity of positions, including teaching English as a second language. He brings a depth of passion to working here, being a part of our organization and contributing his skills and talents. His background

also includes experience in the health care system, alternative medicine and computer networking and maintenance. Nick's personal interests include human psychology, philosophy and gardening. He moved to Humboldt County for the beautiful landscape, quiet atmosphere and the good people.



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# Holidays at Our Pantries

*Continued from page 1*

cookies were a huge hit as well! In their generosity, they made more stockings than they could give away in one day. The extras were given to children participating in Food for People's Backpacks for Kids program in McKinleyville and Blue Lake. On behalf of Food for People and the Arcata Pantry, we want to extend a huge thank you to these amazing young ladies with such big hearts!"

*Darci Gibson, Pantry Network Coordinator*

**Arcata Seniors Pantry** - "Senior volunteers at our Arcata Seniors Pantry, located at the Arcata Community Center, have been distributing commodities for many years and are an integral part of the busy holiday season. Bill Marquardt, Dale and Shannon Gier, John Zanotti, and other senior volunteers come monthly to pack food and distribute bags to low income seniors and community members. These volunteers make the monthly distribution possible at the community center. Without the hard work of these amazing volunteers, especially during the holidays, more members of our community would have to go without key staples supplied by this program."

*Tasha Wilkes, Pantry Coordinator*

**Blue Lake Pantry** - "On the day of our holiday food giving and gifting to folks in Blue Lake, a sweet little lady with her walker walked through our door. She was in need of food and didn't realize we were giving out holiday baskets that day. This was the first time she had ever asked for help with food. It was a little crazy that day with volunteers giving out decorated food and baskets with bags of toys. People were gathered enjoying hot cider and cookies. We were so festive! Fortunately, we had been blessed with an abundant amount of food donations from our gleaner, who brought donations from local markets, and our pantry was full. She joined in on the festivities, partaking of refreshments and visiting with local folks. When I returned to work after the holidays, there was a message from her. She said she was so grateful for the food that she kept opening the doors of her refrigerator and kitchen cabinets to look at it. She



*In photo on left, Kate McCay, Lyn Javier and Kathy Wolff pose at the Bridgeville Pantry while on right, volunteers Kindra Bates, Claudia Sauer, Jimmy Walls, Kent Stanley and Judy McClinton, prepare bags for distribution.*



the first time in months that her refrigerator and kitchen cabinets contained food. She expressed how special we made her holiday."

*Kim Rios, Pantry Coordinator*

**Bridgeville Pantry** - "We want to send a very special thank you to the students at Bridgeville Elementary School for their donation of more than 110 pounds of food during their Christmas Food Drive for the Bridgeville Emergency Food Pantry. Another huge thank you goes to Swain's Flat Store for their participation in Food for People's Holiday Food and Fund Drive and the community donation of 100.5 pounds of food for the Christmas Baskets. Lastly, thank you to Roger for fixing our dishwasher and building a ramp for our shed."

*Chris Frenzel, Pantry Coordinator*

**Garberville Pantry** - "This year C&K Markets sponsored prepackaged donation bags with very useful food items which made it very easy for customers to donate. The managers, David at Rays and Tommy at Shop Smart, did a lot to encourage the checkers to ask if customers wanted to donate - and most people said yes! South Fork High School, Community Credit Union, North Valley Bank and Redwoods Rural Health Center all collected food and donated to the Pantry. We

Patti Rose, Pantry Coordinator

**Orick Pantry** - "Clients were all grateful and happy this December. Lots of hugs and 'Happy Holidays' were handed out. I love my seniors! They are always so happy to come in. They just make the 'job' worth it."

*Luann Johnson, Pantry Coordinator*

**Scotia/Rio Dell Pantry** -

"Thanks for all the hard work and dedication from the pantry's volunteers this holiday season (and all year long)! Our teams work hard unloading all the food, filling the bags and being ready for whatever happens on food distribution days. Food for People is totally amazing and it is a gift to have you in our local community. I am very proud to know all of you and have your commitment to this pantry year after year!"

*Jay and Linda Wardell and Bill and Winifred Park, Site Coordinators*

**Willow Creek Pantry** -

"The most touching thing about the holidays are the little gifts brought to us to distribute. Usually they are from people who have very little themselves. One lady, who works for minimum wage, brought in three gift cards each from different stores in Eureka. Another man brought \$200 worth of gift cards from Ray's Food Place. Another lady brought a quantity of pound cakes. Yet another lady brought in

heartwarming. It is our privilege to be the conduit between the givers and the receivers - for that we are truly grateful."

*Tamara Jenkinson, Pantry Coordinator*

A heart felt thank you from our other pantries at Eureka, Humboldt Seniors, Ferndale, Fortuna, Loleta, McKinleyville and Trinidad to their local communities and volunteers. *We couldn't do it without you!*



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## **Welcome Jeff!**

Jeff has been a resident of the North Coast since 1979 and has always appreciated living in a small town community. He started out in the family business in 1987 and raised a family while working alongside his parents. They ran Six Rivers Produce until 1997 when the business was closed. He has also worked as a law enforcement officer for both the Ferndale Police Department and Del Norte County, which sharpened his sense of community and solidified his desire to stay local. After leaving law enforcement, Jeff continued to work locally, and eventually found himself blessed with the position of Food Distribution Coordinator at

Food For People.

In his spare time, Jeff enjoys Star Trek reruns, table top role playing games and miniature skirmish games (such as Dungeons & Dragons and Warhammer 40K). He is a single father of three teenagers and a "rescued" two-year-old overgrown puppy which keeps him pretty busy in his off time. He tells us, "I wouldn't change a thing." Jeff plans on staying with Food for People for a long time and doing his part to help overcome hunger in Humboldt County.



## **Dear Friends,**

Thank you all! I have learned so much from you over the years. It has been an honor to work alongside all of the incredibly dedicated and talented Food for People staff, both past and present. I appreciate your tireless effort and ingenuity and value the friendships I have made over the years (and hope to never lose touch)!

The many volunteers who freely give their time in service of our mission are amazing. Volunteer jobs at the food bank are not always very glamorous, yet you all do them with such humor and good cheer. One of my favorite parts of working at the food bank has been having lunch with

volunteers and getting to know everyone a little better. Anyone who says the art of conversation is dying has obviously never enjoyed lunch at the food bank.

I am going to miss working with my many, many partners through the Child Nutrition Programs. What a privilege it has been to get to know so many amazing people in our community! Thank you goes to the Rotary, Soroptimist and Kiwanis Clubs for the opportunity to collaborate with you on working to solving hunger issues that affect us all. I send much respect to *all* the people at *all* the sites where we put nutritious food into the hands (and mouths) of kids and teens. You are all doing excellent work with children and families

## **Welcome Darcy!**

Darci Gibson joins us as our new Pantry Network Coordinator. Her professional background includes project management and volunteer coordination. She has provided many hours to the recruitment, community outreach and fundraising efforts for local nonprofits in the past few years since relocating to Humboldt County. Professionally she has worked with people from all walks of life. She sees herself as a people advocate and feels most fulfilled when helping others.

Originally from Colorado, Darci has also lived in Los Angeles and Seoul, South Korea before moving to Eureka. When she has free time, she takes pleasure in bonsai, photography, quilting, drawing, painting and other craft projects. She laments that there isn't enough time for it all. Darci is a person who, by choice or by design, is always busy and thrive-

each and every day. You see and know the heart of poverty in our communities, yet do not turn your backs. Instead, you build relationships, strengthen the network and reach out to help those who need a lift. I am once again filled with awe as I contemplate all the

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# What's Cooking at Food for People?

*By Ciel Hoyt, Nutrition Education Coordinator*

We are excited to announce that we now have a new and improved kitchen at our Eureka location. Our cooking facility has been remodeled into a modest commercial-style kitchen equipped with a six-burner gas stove, ample cabinet space, a huge stainless steel refrigerator and beautiful counter tops. We also upgraded our equipment by donating cooking supplies that were no longer being used and

purchasing new and improved functional items.

We are excited to put our kitchen to use in several ways. We will be able to provide a great working space for the volunteers who cook healthy and delicious lunches for our volunteer crew. Our updated kitchen also allows us to offer hands-on nutrition and cooking classes to the people who utilize our services. We will be able to tailor classes for specific needs, including brand new cooks, clients

with diet-related diseases such as diabetes, and people without cooking equipment of their own.

Our first on-site class took place last November. The participants were young adults with developmental disabilities from a local organization, Remi Vista. They were also people who utilized the services of our Choice Pantry and had limited cooking skills or experience with cooking.

The class began with a 45-minute interactive nutrition

lesson. Participants learned about the major food groups and how they could build a healthy plate of food. Most of them were surprised to learn that half of their plate should be filled with fruits and vegetables. We discussed several examples of foods that belong to each food group, as well as the healthiest versions within these groups. For example, grilled chicken in place of fried chicken would be a healthier choice.

The interactive activity portion of the class was really effective. They were challenged to create a hypothetical meal using their least favorite foods. After all, many of us are faced with this reality. This is a necessary skill to have if we want to eat a balanced healthy diet rather than opting for the dollar menu at a fast food restaurant. I also passed out "MyPlate Makeover Cards" in which a photo of an unhealthy meal such as fish sticks and French fries is made over to fit the "MyPlate" model (such as grilled fish with salad and roasted potatoes). "MyPlate" is the current nutrition guide published by the United States Department of Agriculture depicting a place setting with a plate and glass divided into five food groups. I asked them for their observations and what they can do to some of the meals they eat at home to make them over. This was a wonderful visual aid and activity which helped teach our students how to remake their favorite foods into something more nourishing and healthy.

We then moved to the kitchen where we got cooking. The formal part demonstration and part hands on. Each participant was given their own cooking kit, apron and cooking task. They received individual attention on basic cooking skills such as correct use of a knife and how to peel and prepare vegetables.

We made baked parsnip fries, hummus, a crunchy veggie and hummus wrap with shredded beets, carrots, and sliced cucumbers, and a berry banana smoothie. Then we sat down to enjoy the fruits (and veggies) of our labor together. While we ate



*Ciel Hoyt, our Nutrition Education Coordinator, cooks up some samples to share in our Choice Pantry along with recipes while Dean Thurnall cooks up a healthy lunch for our volunteers.*



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## **Volunteer Spotlight** *By Philip Anderson, Volunteer Coordinator*

Volunteers are the backbone of Food for People. Without them, we could not even begin to provide access to healthy food for so many in our county, or pursue our mission to eliminate hunger. We value all of our volunteers, whether they come in once a month or whether they give their time to serve others on a daily basis. We do have a few exceptional volunteers, which is why we take the time to provide a spotlight on the services they provide.

Erin Tharp has been volunteering with Food for People since mid-September of 2013. Since her start here she has filled a variety of roles, from cooking meals for other volunteers to interviewing and shopping with clients, and can often be found working at the front desk. Erin has a good understanding of what goes on at our Eureka Choice Pantry. She loves the fast-paced environment of the pantry on distribution days and feels like she is gaining great skills for future employment. She also appreciates the opportunity to help a diverse group of people with a basic need. Her main role has been to make pantry appointments and provide resources for those who come to

us for assistance while running the front desk. Erin's own personal experience with the resources we offer has made her a valuable asset to our team of volunteers. "I know how frustrating it can be sometimes," says Erin, "I want to be able to direct people to the best resources available."

Rebecca is also an invaluable and hard working volunteer who has been with Food for People for several years. She has volunteered in almost every capacity and is great at filling in any gaps we might have on a given day. In addition to volunteering at our Choice Pantry, she also helps out with other programs such as delivering food for the Senior and Homebound programs. All of the staff know Rebecca and are excited when she shows up to help. She likes volunteering at Food for People because she has the time to give and she appreciates the direct service she is able to provide. "I can see that what I do here can actually help people," explains Rebecca.

Sharon Bishop is another amazing volunteer who has been with Food for People for two years. Her role has been primarily to work in the warehouse and includes

setting, packing and sorting food in preparation for the rest of the day. She is in the warehouse almost every morning and arrives with a smiling face ready for work. Sharon loves volunteering and thanks her two kids and six grandchildren for keeping her so active. "Food for People is very compassionate and helps with so much," Sharon states. "I like it here - it really lets you get to know your neighbor." Before she started at Food for People, Sharon spent 15 years volunteering at Jefferson school.

These volunteers, along with the many others at Food for People, emanate the true giving spirit of this community. They are the heart of our organization and make it possible to achieve the smooth running of all of our programs. In the words of Helen Keller, "Alone we can do so little, together we can do so much."

*In photo at bottom left, Rebecca and Sharon Bishop join Erin Tharp at the front desk!*

## **Welcome**

Philip is welcomed to the po three years of working for the Hum Red Cross. He has worked with v disasters such as Hurricane Sandy Joplin, Missouri. Philip tells us, "It the country can join together to h

Philip is continuing his und University in Biology. He has serv wealth of experience and true app

Additionally, Philip loves the c possible to enjoy the natural be Whether hiking, running or kayaking other hobby, which is baking!



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**SAFFWAY**

# Thank you all for a successful Hunger Fighter Challenge!

This year's Hunger Fighter teams were truly champions, bringing in 10,868 pounds and \$5,158 in funds during Food for People's 21<sup>st</sup> annual **Holiday Spirit Food and Fund Drive**. More than 50 teams participated in this effort

to raise the most food and funds possible during the holidays in order to help our friends and neighbors in need.

Our Hunger Fighter teams were enthusiastic about the cause and had lots of creative ideas and ways to collect food and

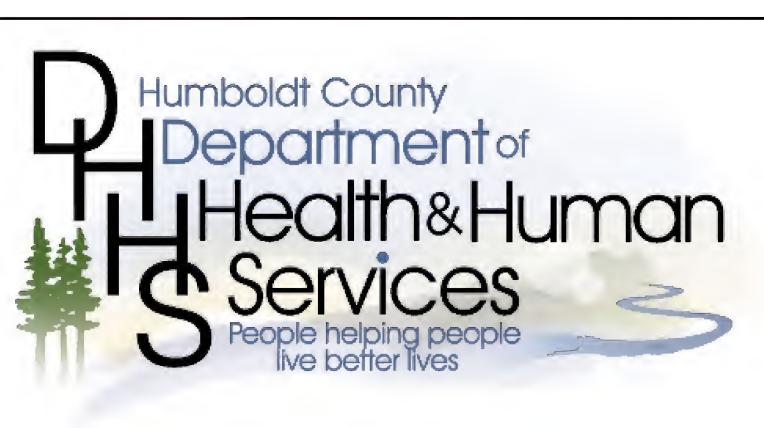
monetary donations throughout the community this season. Some groups hosted community events to collect food donations and raise funds through silent auctions or wine pours. Other groups distributed food drive information, donation bags and donation

envelopes to their employees or other community members. Some teams solicited local businesses to host additional food donation barrels. Team leaders regularly communicated with their teammates, sending progress updates and tips to keep everyone

## Gold Star Hunger Fighter Teams



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# Year in Review

*By Deborah Waxman, Director of Programs*

The close of Fiscal Year 2012-2013 marks our biggest year ever, and our 14 programs accomplished quite a lot. We distributed a record breaking 2.1 million pounds of food across Humboldt County, along with a tremendous amount of outreach to help households gain food security beyond what we can provide. What does it take to move 2.1 million pounds of food, and what impact does it have on the more than 12,000 children, seniors and individuals it reaches each month?

It takes an average of 395 volunteers per month, working an average of 2,739 hours—bringing in, sorting and packing food in our warehouse, assisting clients in our Choice Pantry and 14 other pantries in our

county-wide network, packing and delivering food through our Senior, Homebound and Child Nutrition Programs, supervising Children's Summer Lunch distribution sites, working at our seasonal outdoor free farmers' markets, gleaning produce donations from local farms, orchards and backyard gardens, and making every food drive a success. The hours that our cherished volunteers share with us are equivalent to 18 full-time staff positions. That just about doubles our staff size, and we could not accomplish all that we do without the teamwork of all.

In the last year, our on-site Choice Pantry provided a total of 14,760 shopping trips to households in the Eureka area. This breaks down to an average of 1,230 households per

month meeting with our volunteer intake interviewers and shopping through the pantry to select the foods they want and need across all food groups. Our Pantry Network, of which the Choice Pantry is part, provides food for 15 pantries in the county, reaching an average of 2,616 households each month, from as far south as Garberville, north to Orick, east to Willow Creek and Hoopa and many communities in between. Our Pantry Network program also provides food to four congregate feeding sites that served an average of 4,784 meals per month.

Our Senior Brown Bag program continues to serve up to 300 low-income seniors (age 60+) monthly, and our Homebound Delivery Program for adults under 60 years of age, who are too ill or disabled to leave their homes, serves up to 100 people each month. The Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP) for

seniors, pregnant and postpartum women, and children up to age six, provided food for up to 326 households each month. The success of these three programs and their ability to reach as many people as they do, relies, in part, on the generosity of volunteers who prepare the bags, make reminder calls to seniors about upcoming distributions in various parts of the county, and volunteer to deliver bags to homebound individuals.

Our Child Nutrition Program reached more kids than the year before, distributing more than 65,000 snacks through the After School Snack program to an average of 319 children per day at 13 sites. This ensures that children have adequate nutrition to complete their homework and play after school, serving as a bridge between school lunch and dinner, if there is dinner. Our Backpacks for Kids program was a success thanks to a patchwork of caring volunteers and site partners who made it possible for

## Thank you Silver Bell Sponsors



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JAN WERREN  
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GAVIN AND VIRGINIA  
SUE BROOKS  
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AGNES AND HERB WALL  
JULIE AND TERRY MOORE  
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CRAIG HINES AND  
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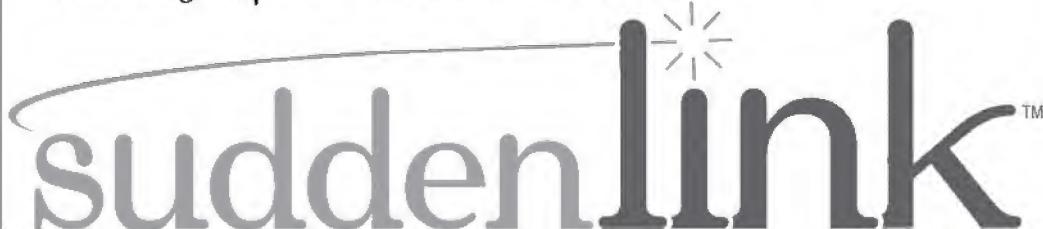
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ELLIS HEMENWAY  
DOUGLAS STOCKLY  
ESTER AKINS  
MARJORIE MOHROVICH  
SUE FEE  
SYDNEY K SCHWARTZ  
TISHRI ANDERSON  
JOHN, JASON AND  
WENDI DIAMOND  
ELDIN GREEN  
JJ HALL  
TIM MCKAY  
SAM AND EVELYN  
LEEPER  
JOHN BERTI  
LAURA MYERS  
AUDREY McROBERTS  
JOHN AND MINA  
TURLEY  
MARY ROSE O'NEAL

ELMA BURNS  
CATHERINE YEHLE  
SUSIE WILLIAMS  
REBECCA EDWARDS  
MARILYN MURPHY  
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THELMA SOUTER  
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# Interview with Niki Gribi

*By Harriet Pecot, Fund Development Director*

Niki Gribi is moving on after working at Food for People as our Child Nutrition Programs Coordinator for the past three and a half years. The following interview shares some of her reflections about this program which includes Backpacks for Kids, After School Snacks and Children's Summer Lunch.

**What are the major challenges of these three programs?**

"The biggest challenge of these programs is trying to provide the highest quality, most nutritious food we can within the limits of our budget - I always wanted to provide more, better, fresher and healthier food and that wasn't always possible. One factor is the availability of food, and another major element is the price of food, which tends to be more expensive in Humboldt County due to transportation costs. The challenge of these programs includes working with a limited budget and trying to provide diversity even when it isn't always available."

There really isn't a huge budget for the Child Nutrition programs. The allocated cost for the snacks we purchase is limited to 50 cents per snack. The food for Backpacks is only budgeted at \$6 per backpack and needs to provide enough nutritious food for breakfast, lunch and dinner for two days (which ends up equaling \$1 per meal).

The locally donated food we receive throughout the year is a great source of additional food and allowed me to provide a better balance, as well as more diversity in the food for the Backpacks for Kids program.

The Summer Lunch program is a life saver to many families who rely on the children's food programs during the school year. From my point of view, this program is really challenging because it is so fast paced. There is daily ordering and daily deliveries and if anything goes awry it needs a fast reply and immediate attention. It is amazing when you step back and think of the scope of delivering 300 lunches a day to kids who are hundreds of miles apart including some very remote areas. The

sites than the other two programs, but even still there are some folks who can't find transportation for their kids or have a Summer Lunch site in their community."

**Tell me about the fresh fruit and vegetables you include with the Backpacks for Kids food.**

"A couple of years ago, we made providing fresh produce in our weekly backpacks a priority and we have been doing that through Farm to Family produce and our Gleaning program at no extra cost. The school children love it - they get excited about the fresh produce, and especially love it when we bring apples. You can tell that an apple is a big deal to these kids. I started packing a lot of extra apples when they were available through our local Gleaning program. I would use a lot of the gleaned apples in the backpacks as well as with the After School Snack program. We replaced the juice packs with fresh fruit in our Snack program hoping to make it a regular thing. This was popular with school children as well as the folks who run the snack sites although it does add another layer of logistics and inventory."

**Did you experience any other major challenges with the programs?**

"When I first started working at Food for People, I saw resistance from our donors to fund administrative costs. People have a comfort level donating funds for food but not always for administration. The reasoning is that donations which are going directly to pay for food have limited potential for mismanagement. There are a lot of dimensions to administration and some funders preferred to keep it simple. Unfortunately, that kind of thinking is not seeing the whole picture. There is no way we could have the program if no one is supporting the position. How would we move the food? How would we evaluate the program? How would we monitor the sites? Without administration you would just have the food sitting at the stores. Comprehensive funding is crucial to our Child Nutrition programs."

**With our desks located right across from each other, I**

**talk more about this?**

"We have limits to what we can do - there is only so much warehouse space, only so many hours and only one person managing the programs. The biggest limit is warehouse space and time. For example, we can only accommodate 450 children in our Backpacks for Kids program right now, otherwise we wouldn't have room for the food."

With Backpacks, we have a certain number of sites, and if a child doesn't attend a school which is partnering with us, then they aren't eligible for the program. If we are full for the sites we do partner with then we can't accept more children into the program. The parents are calling us because they genuinely need help (it is incredibly stressful not to be able to feed your children). I always felt terrible saying no and would try to refer them to other services or to one of our pantries or help families to locate resource centers near them. If they were calling here then they obviously needed help. I would have to turn families with children away on a regular basis."

**Has your perception of your job changed through the years?**

"No, I was always clear on what the job was and how it is affected by real life limitations. I was always interested in helping people going through a hard time and I knew we weren't going to feed everyone."

**What was one of your best moments?**

"Working at FFP I wrote my first grant and consequently received



money for a program I believed in. This felt awesome - like I had really accomplished something tangible, which in this situation, meant feeding more kids. I am proud of increasing the numbers of all of our Child Nutrition Programs and working to achieve consistency by holding the numbers steady year after year. My goal was 50,000 After School Snacks, 10,000 Backpacks and 15,000 Summer Lunches for a given year."

**What will you miss about working at Food for People?**

"I will miss a lot of things such as working with our amazing partners. I was plugged into a tightly knit web of caring people in many locations throughout our county. These are people who are working to do well and make life better for

*Continued on page 13*

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## With Niki

*Continued from page 12*

those in their community who are less fortunate. I loved learning about the work going on by these special people and I will miss being touched regularly by this undercurrent of generosity in Humboldt County. I feel grateful to have met so many cool people and been included into this caring community on a regular basis. After working at Food for People for the past three years I finally felt like I had achieved a higher level of competency, knowing where to go for available resources, understanding the capabilities within our community and I could enjoy being part of this network of people using their power to do good.

I will also miss the amazing staff at Food for People. I made a lot of friends working here and experienced more co-workers becoming real friends that I can really count on, which can be rare to find in any workplace."

### ***Do you have any parting words of wisdom?***

"I would say try to stay positive. It is easy to get bogged down on why there is so much need and how challenging life is for so many. I would work to flip it around and look at all the amazing things we are all doing and how the community is banding together to make it possible."



*Above photos show Argelia Muñoz, Community Foods Program Coordinator, packing up food for a senior distribution while the McCanns make volunteering in our warehouse a family affair!*

## Year in Review

distribute.

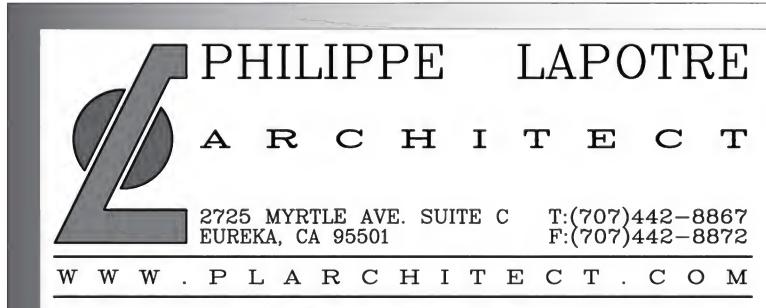
Our newest program, the Mobile Produce Pantry, made 91 visits to 10 community sites last year, setting up free farm stand-style produce distributions in underserved communities. Sites included Manila, Orick, Orleans, Rio Dell, Weitchpec, Willow Creek, Bridgeville, Redway, Phillipsville and Fortuna. Combined, the program serves an average of about 300 households each month, representing an average of 823 individuals gaining much-needed access to fresh fruits and vegetables. A large portion of the fresh produce available through this program is purchased, with grant funds, directly from local farmers, and included a staggering variety of 44 different types of produce items. This ranged from the staples like greens, carrots, broccoli and potatoes, to more adventurous items like kohlrabi, artichokes, parsnips, fennel and daikon radish. With the help of our staff Nutrition Education Coordinator, we provide recipe cards and food demos in the field to introduce clients to unfamiliar items and share ideas on how to prepare them. All participants are pre-screened for CalFresh and application assistance is always available on-site.

Our large seasonal free Farmers' Market-Style Produce Distributions at four locations (Eureka, Fortuna, Garberville and Redway) are popular monthly events. Combined, they provided 163,574 pounds of food to more than 3,000 households representing more than 9,000 individual family members. These festive events also feature outreach services with free recipes, CalFresh application assistance, food demos, and sometimes live music. The popularity of these markets tells us a lot about the demand for access to fresh fruit and vegetables in our low-income community. Some of the attendees at our Eureka site arrive up to four hours early.

Our Community Education and Outreach program utilizes a curriculum called "Hunger 101," which walks participants through a day in the life of people struggling to get enough food (and variety of food) to feed their families for the

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# CalFresh Updates: The Coming Year

*By Heidi McHugh, Community Education and Outreach Coordinator*

Last year showed us that Humboldt County is still recovering from the "Great Recession." Despite reports of the recession officially ending in 2009, more and more Americans are facing increased hardships in paying for bare necessities like housing and food. According to the California Food Policy Advocates, 22% of Humboldt County residents were living at or below the Federal Poverty Line in 2012, and this percentage has increased from 19% in 2009. Poverty amongst children in our county has been even harder hit - increasing to 28% in 2012 from 22.7% in 2009.

The United States Congress continues to act in opposition of this undeniable growth in poverty. The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (currently known as CalFresh in California and formerly known as Food Stamps) has had its benefits significantly reduced. Congress has also failed to extend unemployment benefits to 1.3 million Americans who are experiencing long-term unemployment. Both these programs were created as safety nets to respond to widespread economic hardship. Their use has historically declined as the economy improved for all income brackets. By cutting these programs and taking away these safeguards, we risk the continued increase in both the growth and the depth of poverty.

Humboldt County includes a lot of good people resolved to fight poverty - and consequently hunger - through what remains of vital programs like CalFresh, and through creative solutions that empower people to make healthy choices. The Humboldt County CalFresh Task Force (CFTF) consists of locally-based organizations and representatives from the Humboldt County Department of Health and Human Services, who meet monthly to share ideas, access local needs and work to connect eligible residents with CalFresh.

The North Coast Growers Association (NCGA) Farmers' Markets have been offering

2011, NCGA and Food for People partnered together to launch the Market Match program, offering a bonus incentive for residents using CalFresh at their farmers market. During 2012, the Market Match was extended to include the Fortuna and Garberville farmers markets, thanks to the effort of the Community Alliance for Family Farms (CAFF), another member of CFTF. This created an opportunity for recipients to access some of the healthiest, locally grown foods available, which are too often out of financial reach for them, while keeping CalFresh dollars in our community. In 2008 approximately \$5,000 was spent on EBT cards at NCGA farmers markets. In 2013, almost \$35,000 was spent at NCGA farmers markets!

Food for People and CAFE have worked together over the past several years to provide garden growing cards for CalFresh shoppers and potential CalFresh applicants which can be found at local farmers' markets. Together we currently have "how to" cards for growing 16 different varieties of vegetables in Humboldt County, both inland and coastal. Each card has tips on how to start the vegetables from seeds or seedlings, how to care for the plants until they are ready and when to harvest, as well as tips for preparing and cooking the fresh vegetables. The back of each card also includes information about CalFresh and local contact information for additional information.

Another CTF member is Area 1 Agency on Aging (A1AA). They offer unique services to the community of older adults and caregivers in Humboldt County. Their services include assistance with CalFresh applications, either at their office on 7<sup>th</sup> Street in Eureka or in the homes of people with mobility issues. They also do in-home Food Security Assessments and provide nutrition-related assistive devices. Another great program is A1AA's partnership with the Humboldt Senior Resource Center. They will deliver 14 free meals to people who have been discharged from a medical setting.



## Welcome Michael!

Michael Quintana brings a variety of skills to the position of CalFresh Outreach and Application Assistor. He worked in the health care field for many years, specifically as a business owner and provider at orthotics and prosthetics clinics in Humboldt and Mendocino Counties. After his long-time career, he was inspired to make a change and find new purpose within the community. He is especially excited to collaborate and connect with the Spanish speaking community in Humboldt County. Michael looks forward to making a positive and nutritious contribution through his work with Food for People on both individual and community levels by increasing the accessibility of healthy food to our neighbors in need.

Work or play, Michael is very

interested in health. He enjoys spending time with his wife, Kelda, working in the yard and caring for their edible garden. They also grow flowers and tend the hummingbird and wild bird feeders in their yard. He loves spending time out in nature and learning how to contribute to the wellbeing of the environment. He regularly takes pleasure in cooking healthy food, exercising at the gym, practicing yoga, meditation and connecting to his spiritual life.

## Year in Review

*Continued from page 13*

our *Plant a Row for the Hungry* program. Thanks to a couple of special grants, our Local Food Resources program was able to partner with dozens of local farmers to purchase local, and often organic, produce to supplement our Senior, Homebound and Mobile Produce Pantry programs.

To say we accomplished a lot doesn't begin to sum up the amount of work and generosity that went into making it all happen. We want to recognize everyone who played a part in the successes: I work with the hardest working staff in the business, all sincerely committed to the mission. Our

Our volunteers give selflessly of their skills and compassion as they work alongside us. Our donors lay the foundation of every success that puts nutritious food in the hands of the children, seniors and all low-income individuals who participate in our programs. Our community partners work with us to provide a strong food security safety net in Humboldt County. We thank you for all



# Food for People

Thank you to all of the local individuals, business groups and organizations who joined us in the and helped make our 2013 Holiday Spirit Foo

### HUNGER FIGHTER CHALLENGE TEAMS

#### GOLD STAR WINNERS

Cuddly Bear Thrift Store  
Dell'Arte International  
Humboldt County Department of Health & Human Services/Social Services Branch  
Kiwanis Club of Henderson Center  
Kokatof, Inc.  
Mad River Community Hospital  
Prudential Redwood Realty  
Recology Humboldt County  
Redwood Coast Energy Authority  
Sequoia Gas Company  
St. Joseph's Health System Humboldt County

#### HUNGER FIGHTER CHAMPIONS

Area 1 Agency on Aging  
Back Country Horsemen of California Redwood Unit  
California State & Federal Employees Credit Union  
CalTrans - District 01  
Changing Tides Family Services  
Department of Rehabilitation  
Educational Resource Center and Eureka Community School  
Edward Jones Investments - Von Hawley Butterfield  
Employment Development Department - The Job Market  
Environmental Technology, Inc.  
Eureka Physical Therapy - Eureka and Fortuna  
Federal Employees Building - Arcata  
First Covenant Church Youth Group  
Foxfarm Soil and Fertilizer Company  
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HCAR - Bay and Sequoia Centers  
Humboldt County Community Development (Planning and Building Divisions)  
Humboldt County Department of Health & Human Services/Adult Services  
Humboldt County Department of Health & Human Services/Call Center  
Humboldt County Department of Health & Human Services/Community Wellness Center  
Humboldt County Division of Environmental Health  
Humboldt Del Norte IPA  
Humboldt Senior Resource Center  
Kiwanis Club of Fortuna  
LACO Associates  
National Weather Service  
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Pan Dulce Steel Orchestra/HLOC KidCo  
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Eureka Women's Club  
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First Congregational United Church of Christ  
First United Methodist Church of Eureka  
First Presbyterian Church of Eureka  
FFA - Arcata, Fortuna and McKinleyville  
Grocery Outlet  
HealthSPORT  
Humboldt County Department of Health & Human Services

Thank you for helping Food for People make sure our friends

# Gleaning Wrap-Up

By Laura Hughes, Local Food Resources Coordinator

2013 has been one of the most successful gleaning years on record at Food for People, bringing in a total of 73,678 lbs of fresh produce from local farms, gardens and back yards throughout Humboldt County. This produce was distributed through our hunger-relief programs and provides the opportunity for fresh, locally-grown produce to those who would otherwise not have been able to afford it. Fresh produce is a vital part of any healthy diet, but too often it's left out when money is tight. Fortunately, there are solutions that can bridge the gap between food insecurity and local food sources, and that's where Food for People's Gleaning program comes in.

Our Gleaning program has evolved over time and encompasses two complementary elements. Mostly, many local farmers donate leftover produce they've harvested but are unable

to sell for various reasons. Other times, farmers invite us out to harvest items on-farm that would otherwise go to waste. Too much summer squash to handle? Beets got too big? Just give us a call and we can help!

Deep Seeded Community Farm is one of our most regular gleaning supporters. Farmer Eddie Tanner donates produce leftover from his twice-weekly Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) distributions in Arcata that we pick up every Monday and Thursday from April through December. Eddie also calls periodically to offer up a spinach patch or carrot bed if we'll do the harvesting.

After picking up from Deep Seeded, we'll often stop by Mad River Community Hospital Farm to harvest produce with farmer Isaiah Webb that hasn't been used by the hospital's cafeteria, or we travel to Potawot Farm to pick up CSA distribution leftovers from farmers T and Ed. Redwood Roots Farm

also occasionally donates excess produce and if we're lucky we'll even catch an on-farm lunch with farmer Janet and the crew.

Blake Richard of Wild Rose Farm is another of our generous donors. In addition to donating on a regular basis, Blake also invites us out to the farm occasionally to harvest row crops. Last year we took a few trips out to his farm in Blue Lake to harvest Brussels sprouts, mustard greens and kale.

A number of other farms also contact us to harvest a variety of crops throughout the growing season. John at Little River Farm donates greens that have gotten too large to sell, or extra chard, kale and fava beans. Jacques and Amy at Neukom Family Farm in Willow Creek invite us out regularly during the height of tomato season to harvest the surplus of cherry tomatoes. Bill at Valley Flower Vegetable invites us down to Shively to pick tomatoes and winter squash each year, and Betty at Fieldbrook Valley Apples hosts a handful of apple harvesting trips for our crew each fall, complete with home-made caramel apples from her shop when we're done.

In addition to these on-farm opportunities, we also work with the North Coast Growers Association to canvass weekly farmers markets, and collect whatever extra produce hasn't been sold.

The second component to our gleaning program is our local "Plant a Row for the Hungry" campaign, and involves community residents with gardens or fruit trees. This is a nation-wide, people-helping-people program sponsored by the Garden Writers Association. Food for People facilitates this campaign locally which provides a simple way for all backyard gardeners to pitch in and furnish food relief locally. By donating the surplus from their gardens, local residents can ensure

their neighbors in need have access to fresh fruits and vegetables.

Productive donations from the community were especially plentiful this year, particularly from residents with fruit trees. Between the favorable fruit-producing weather, our media campaign and increasing word of mouth between neighbors and friends, fruit tree donations were abundant!

Penelope and Bill Chastain also donate regularly and have a small homestead with grapes, pears, plums, figs and pomegranates, as well as other crops. They invite a volunteer crew out each year to harvest, and insist upon serving us lunch and sharing stories.

Arcata resident Susan Anderson invited us out last spring to take cuttings of her perennial tree collard plants to distribute to home gardeners at the food bank. She tells us, "Food for People's willingness to help out makes it easy to provide good food to people who might not be able to access it otherwise."

In addition to providing fresh, produce, Food for People's Nutrition Education and Outreach team also provides easy recipes and tips for preparing the different produce items. We hear over and over again how appreciative folks are of the fresh, high-quality produce (and recipes!) we're able to provide through the generosity of farmers and growers like you.

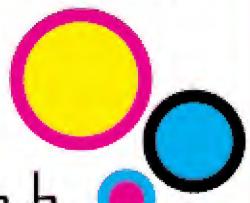


In above photo, Nick Nelson volunteers by picking apples at Fieldbrook Valley Apple Farm while the volunteer in photo at right gleans mustard greens at Wild Rose Farm in Blue Lake.



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